

## CIRM Board Approves Funding for New Clinical Trial Targeting Brain Tumors

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**South San Francisco, CA** – Today the governing Board of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) awarded almost \$12 million to carry out a clinical trial targeting brain tumors.

This brings the total number of CIRM funded clinical trials to 83.

\$11,999,984 was awarded to Dr. Jana Portnow at the Beckman Research Institute of City of Hope. They are using Neural stem cells (NSCs) as a form of delivery vehicle to carry a cancer-killing virus that specifically targets brain tumor cells.

Glioblastoma is the most common malignant primary brain tumor in adults and each year about 12,000 Americans are diagnosed. The 5-year survival rate is only about 10%.

The current standard of care involves surgically removing the tumor followed by radiation, chemotherapy, and alternating electric field therapy. Despite these treatments, survival remains low.

The award to Dr. Portnow will fund a clinical trial to assess the safety and effectiveness of this stem cell-based treatment for Glioblastoma.

The Board also awarded \$3,111,467 to Boris Minev of Calidi Biotherapeutics. This award is in the form of a CLIN1 grant, with the goal of completing the testing needed to apply to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for permission to start a clinical trial in people.

This project uses donor fat-derived mesenchymal stem cells that have been loaded with oncolytic virus to target metastatic melanoma, triple negative breast cancer, and advanced head & neck squamous cell carcinoma.

"There are few options for patients with advanced solid tumor cancers such as glioblastoma, melanoma, breast cancer, and head & neck cancer," says Maria T. Millan, M.D., President and CEO of CIRM. "Surgical resection, chemotherapy and radiation are largely ineffective in advanced cases and survival typically is measured in months. These new awards will support novel approaches to address the unmet medical needs of patients with these devastating cancers."

The CIRM Board also voted to approve awarding \$71,949,539 to expand the CIRM Alpha Clinics Network. The current network consists of six sites and the Board approved continued funding for those and added an additional three sites. The funding is to last five years.

The goal of the Alpha Clinics award is to expand existing capacities for delivering stem cell, gene therapies and other advanced treatment to patients. They also serve as a competency hub for regenerative medicine training, clinical research, and the delivery of approved treatments.

Each applicant was required to submit a plan for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to support and facilitate outreach and study participation by underserved and disproportionately affected populations in the clinical trials they serve.

The successful applicants are:

Application	Program Title	Institution/Principal Investigator	Amount awarded

INFR4-13579	The Stanford Alpha Stem Cell Clinic	Stanford University – Matthew Porteus	\$7,997,246
INFR4-13581	UCSF Alpha Stem Cell Clinic	U.C. San Francisco – Mark Walters	\$7,994,347
INFR4-13586	A comprehensive stem cell and gene therapy clinic to advance new therapies for a diverse patient population in California	Cedars-Sinai Medical Center – Michael Lewis	\$7,957,966
INFR4-13587	<i>The City of Hope Alpha Clinic: A roadmap for equitable and inclusive access to regenerative medicine therapies for all Californians</i>	City of Hope – Leo Wang	\$8,000,000
INFR4-13596	<i>Alpha Stem Cell Clinic for Northern and Central California</i>	U.C. Davis – Mehrdad Abedi	\$7,999,997
INFR4-13685	<i>Expansion of the Alpha Stem Cell and Gene Therapy Clinic at UCLA</i>	U.C. Los Angeles – Noah Federman	\$8,000,000
INFR4-13878	<i>Alpha Clinic Network Expansion for Cell and Gene Therapies</i>	University of Southern California – Thomas Buchanan	\$7,999,983
INFR4-13952	<i>A hub and spoke community model to equitably deliver regenerative medicine therapies to diverse populations across four California counties</i>	U.C. Irvine – Daniela Bota	\$8,000,000
INFR4-13597	<i>UC San Diego Health CIRM Alpha Stem Cell Clinic</i>	U.C. San Diego – Catriona Jamieson	\$8,000,000

The Board also unanimously, and enthusiastically, approved the election of Maria Gonzalez Bonneville to be the next Vice Chair of the Board. Ms. Bonneville, the current Vice President of Public Outreach and Board Governance at CIRM, was nominated by all four constitutional officers: the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Treasurer and the Controller.

In supporting the nomination, Board member Ysabel Duron said: "I don't think we could do better than taking on Maria Gonzalez Bonneville as the Vice Chair. She is well educated as far as CIRM goes. She has a great track record; she is empathetic and caring and will be a good steward for the taxpayers to ensure the work we do serves them well."

In her letter to the Board applying for the position, Ms. Bonneville said: "CIRM is a unique agency with a large board and a long history. With my institutional knowledge and my understanding of CIRM's internal workings and processes, I can serve as a resource for the new Chair. I have worked hand-in-hand with both the Chair and Vice Chair in setting agendas, prioritizing work, driving policy, and advising accordingly. I have worked hard to build trusted relationships with all of you so that I could learn and understand what areas were of the most interest and where I could help shed light on those particular programs or initiatives. I have also worked closely with Maria Millan for the last decade, and greatly enjoy our working relationship. In short, I believe I provide a level of continuity and expertise that benefits the board and helps in times of transition."

In accepting the position Ms. Bonneville said: "I am truly honored to be elected as the Vice Chair for the CIRM Board. I have been a part of CIRM for 11 years and am deeply committed to the mission and this new role gives me an opportunity to help support and advance that work at an exciting time in the Agency's life. There are many challenges ahead of us, but knowing the Board and the CIRM team I feel confident we will be able to meet them, and I look forward to helping us reach our goals."

Ms. Bonneville will officially take office in January 2023.

The vote for the new Chair of CIRM will take place at the Board meeting on December 15th.

### **About CIRM**

At CIRM, we never forget that we were created by the people of California to accelerate stem cell treatments to patients with unmet medical needs, and act with a sense of urgency to succeed in that mission.

To meet this challenge, our team of highly trained and experienced professionals actively partners with both academia and industry in a hands-on, entrepreneurial environment to fast track the development of today's most promising stem cell technologies.

With \$5.5 billion in funding and more than 150 active stem cell programs in our portfolio, CIRM is one of the world's largest institutions dedicated to helping people by bringing the future of cellular medicine closer to reality.

For more information go to [www.cirm.ca.gov](http://www.cirm.ca.gov)

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